Using Teacher Read-Alouds to Enhance First Grade Student’s Vocabulary Development and Comprehension

By

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Abstract

This study examined how the use of read-alouds impacted first grade students' vocabulary, background knowledge, and comprehension. Specifically, the research questions were “How do read-alouds using picture books containing additional teacher-selected vocabulary impact struggling first grade students’ understanding of the stories in the basal reader?” and “How do read-alouds using picture books containing additional teacher-selected vocabulary from the basal reader impact vocabulary development of struggling first grade students?” Twenty, first grade students from a high poverty, urban elementary school in the Midwest received the read-aloud intervention. Only Six first grade students were selected for data collection purposes. The researcher examined the *Journeys* (Baumann et al., 2011) basal reading stories and selected four vocabulary words from the story, along with two picture books to read aloud for each *Journeys* story. The researcher collected data on how many vocabulary words the students had learned and how well the students comprehended the main *Journeys* story. The results indicated that the use of read-alouds enhanced recognition of vocabulary words and their oral retelling of the main story. The study provided methods for how to incorporate read-alouds in a basal reading series that enhances student’s vocabulary, background knowledge and comprehension.

*Keywords:* vocabulary, background knowledge, read-alouds, and comprehension.
Chapter One
Introduction

“It is estimated that children from economically privileged homes enter kindergarten having heard some 30 million more words than students from economically disadvantaged homes” (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2011, p. 226). This statistic from a study conducted by Hart and Risley (2003) showed the importance of vocabulary instruction in the classrooms of young students. The National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHHD], 2000) also found that vocabulary plays a crucial role in student’s reading comprehension. If students from economically disadvantaged homes are not being exposed to the vocabulary needed before they reach kindergarten, then teachers need to find ways to build vocabulary that will help close the vocabulary gap. Research has suggested that the vocabulary gap will continue to grow if it is not addressed in schools today.

Background

The study was conducted in a first grade classroom in one of ten elementary schools in an urban school district located in the Midwest. On the 2013-2014 state report card, the school did not meet the indicator for reading achievement for students in grades three through six (Ohio Department of Education [ODE], 2014). It was noted that in the 2012-2013 school year, 87 K-3 students were not on track for reading. This meant that students were not reading on level according to the Diagnostic Reading Assessment
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(DRA), and were not on track for passing the third grade reading achievement test, therefore were at risk for retention. Of the 87 students, 27 of were on track by the 2013-2014 school year according to the DRA (ODE, 2014). The school building is a Kindergarten through sixth-grade building. There are three Kindergarten teachers, four first-grade teachers, three second-grade teachers, three third-grade teachers, three fourth-grade teachers, two fifth-grade teachers and two sixth-grade teachers. There are also three full time intervention specialists and one half-day intervention specialist. Each grade level has one Title I tutor that pulls small reading groups for students who are reading below grade level.

The researcher graduated in December 2010 with a Bachelor of Science in education and a license to teach both special education K-12 and general education grades PreK-3. The researcher also holds a 4/5-generalist endorsement. The researcher is currently teaching in a first grade classroom in an urban school district. This was the researchers’ third year of teaching first grade in this building.

Importance of the Study

According to the National Reading Panel (NICHHD, 2000), “Vocabulary is one of the most important areas within comprehension” (p. 236). The National Reading Panel stated, “reading comprehension is a cognitive process that integrates complex skills and cannot be understood without examining the crucial role of vocabulary learning and instruction” (NICHHD, 2000, p. 228). Because vocabulary has an impact on students’ reading comprehension, teachers need to equip themselves with researched-based strategies that will foster vocabulary growth to strengthen students’ reading comprehension.
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This research is significant for the researcher, students’ reading comprehension, and other interested teachers in the school. This study is significant to the researcher because it was noticed that sometimes students in the first grade classroom appeared to need additional instruction in order to have the necessary vocabulary and background knowledge to comprehend the *Journeys* Basal reading stories. This was shown in the students’ low scores on the *Journeys* weekly comprehension tests. As a result, the researcher determined that the basal readers selected vocabulary words that did not sufficiently develop or provide the vocabulary that the students needed in order to comprehend the material. Therefore, the researcher wanted to find ways to help develop and expand on the students’ vocabulary and comprehension development through the use of read-alouds that were aligned to the basal reader.

The researcher was interested in the research of Hart and Risley (2003) who studied how vocabulary and background knowledge differ in families under different socio-economic groups, and they found that there is a significant vocabulary gap between different socio-economic groups. The results of their study showed “the average child on welfare was having half as much experience per hour (616 words per hour) as the average working class child (1,251 words per hour) and less than one-third than the average child in a professional family (2,153 words per hour” (p.116). The researcher noticed there was a significant need in her first grade classroom to develop students’ vocabulary in order to strengthen the students’ reading comprehension.

In addition, the researcher had been concerned about the vocabulary words selected by the *Journeys* (Baumann et al., 2011) basal series because the words selected appeared to be tier 1 words that were more sight word based. Wright and Neuman (2013)
examined four of the most commonly used core reading curricula, and found that “Across all programs, there were few opportunities to learn challenging words, and there was little systematic instruction to support their learning or retention” (Wright & Neuman, 2013, p. 402). Similar to these findings and because of the *Journeys* weekly vocabulary instruction, the researcher felt the need to look at other vocabulary words in the basal reader that were tier 2 words and to provide more opportunities for the students to learn these words through the use of read-alouds.

The research could also be important to the first grade students. Based on the district’s new guidelines as necessitated by The Third Grade Reading Guarantee (ODE, 2015), if the first grade students are unable to read a level I DRA book independently, they are considered for retention in the first grade. The researcher noted that most students are reading fluently but struggled to pass the comprehension section of the DRA and weekly basal reader tests. The basal reading series chose some vocabulary words that are more sight word based and did not address other vocabulary words related to build background knowledge the students needed for comprehension. For example, *your* and *these* were two words the basal reader selected as vocabulary words in one of the stories. First grade students should develop automaticity in recognizing these words, but there were additional words in the stories that students might not understand and needed to learn if they were to comprehend the stories. It was noticed that the comprehension test often used vocabulary words that the basal reader did not address in the lessons. Therefore, developing students’ vocabulary and schema was very important to helping them expand and build upon their vocabulary. Tracey and Morrow (2012) define Schema...
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theory as “a constructivist theory that explains how knowledge is created and used by learners” (Tracey & Morrow, 2012, p. 62).

In addition, this was significant to the other teachers because they were experiencing the same difficulties with the basal readers with their students. District wide, all teachers were expected to follow the basal reader selected by the district. If the basal reader is not selecting vocabulary that is able to build students’ schema, then teachers needed to find ways to supplement their basal reader instruction.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact that read-alouds had on building students’ background knowledge and vocabulary related to stories in the Journeys (Baumann et al., 2011) basal reading series. It was noticed in the first grade classroom that many students appeared to lack the vocabulary and background knowledge needed to understand the Journeys basal reader stories. Since it was noticed that students in the first grade classroom were struggling with background knowledge and comprehension, the researcher began looking into two questions that drove the study.

Research Questions

During the study the researcher sought to answer the following questions.

1. How do read-alouds using picture books containing additional teacher-selected vocabulary impact struggling first grade students’ understanding of the stories in the basal reader?
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2. How do read-alouds using picture books containing additional teacher-selected vocabulary from the basal reader impact vocabulary development of struggling first grade students?

Establishing the Study

The researcher established the study first by getting approval from the school principal and Wittenberg University Institutional Review Board (IRB). After receiving approval, the researcher collected informed consents for each participant in the study. Before the study began the researcher looked through the *Journeys* (Baumann et al., 2011) basal reader stories, along with the comprehension tests, to select additional vocabulary words that were used during the study. After selecting the words for each story during the study, the researcher created the vocabulary pre/post-test and selected two picture books for each *Journeys* lesson that were used as read-alouds during the study.

After collecting all the material the researcher began the study the week of March 16, 2015. During the study the researcher followed a weekly routine where she gave a pre-test every Monday at 9:00 am, and a post-test every Friday at 9:00 am. The researcher read the first picture book on Monday and Tuesday and the second picture book on Wednesday and Thursday. Along with the vocabulary post-test, on Fridays the researcher also gave the *Journeys* weekly comprehension test to all students. The researcher also met with six students on Fridays to hold a reading conference where the students completed a retelling of the *Journeys* story for the week. During the retelling the researcher pulled three students who participated in the study and three students who did not. This was done so that the students who participated in the study did not feel singled
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out during the study. Throughout the week the researcher reviewed the teacher selected vocabulary words with the entire class.

**Limitations and Assumptions**

The first limitation was the two week-long breaks during the study for spring break and benchmark testing. Having a consistent time frame during the intervention could have impacted the student’s vocabulary development more. Another limitation the researcher noticed, was that two students who participated in the study were absent multiple times throughout the interventions and missed reviewing the vocabulary words and listening to the picture book read-aloud. Next it was noticed when the researcher was looking for read-alouds that used the vocabulary words selected, the researcher was able to find books with two to three vocabulary words but struggled to find picture books with all four vocabulary words in them. The researcher was able to find picture examples of the missing words in the picture books that were selected. During the read-aloud of the picture book, the researcher would stop and point out the picture of the example of the vocabulary word. Finally, the small number of participants and the context of the study limit the generalizability of the study.

The researcher assumed that the district would continue to use the *Journeys* (Baumann et al., 2011) basal reading series. The researcher assumed that the district would also continue to require the students to take the *Journeys* comprehension test each week on Friday. It is also assumed by the researcher that district will still follow guidelines necessitated by the Ohio Department of Education’s third grade reading guarantee and continue to monitor students’ reading progress in first grade.
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Definition of Terms

The researcher used the following terms consistently throughout this study:

**Basal series:** A complex selection of reading selections, support materials and assessments held together by a hefty teachers edition. (Dewitz & Jones, 2012, p. 292)

**Direct Instruction:** “where teachers explicitly focus students’ attention on specific isolated reading skills and provide information to students about those topics” (Morrow, Tracey, & Del Nero, 2011, p. 69)

**Exploratory Mixed Methods:** “The educator-researcher first collects quantitative data and then gathers additional qualitative data in order to help support, explain or elaborate on the quantitative results.” (Mertler, 2014, p. 104)

**Picture Books:** “Tell stories using both words and pictures” (O’Neal, 2011, p. 214)

**Read-Aloud:** “reading aloud to children—sometimes also referred to as shared storybook reading—is a productive means for giving students opportunities to develop new-meaning vocabulary” (Blackowicz & Fisher, 2011, p. 227).

**Retelling:** Explaining what happened in a story in sequential order using characters and setting. (Dunst, Simkus & Hamby, 2012.)

**Schema:** explains how knowledge is created and used by learners. (Tracey & Morrow, 2013, p. 62)
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*Third Grade Reading Guarantee:* “A program to identify students from kindergarten through grade 3 that are behind in reading. Schools will provide help and support to make sure students are on track for reading success.” (ODE, 2015).

**Summary**

The purpose of this study was to identify the impact that read-alouds had on students’ reading comprehension and vocabulary development. With the problem statement and questions in place, the researcher began to study more information about schema theory and foundational research in vocabulary, vocabulary instruction and read-alouds. Chapter two presents the research found to support this study.
Chapter Two

Literature Review

Since economically disadvantaged children are entering school with smaller vocabularies than children from economically privileged homes (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2011). Hart and Risley examined other ways to help students in economically disadvantaged homes increase their vocabulary development and background knowledge. The review of research by the National Reading Panel (NICHHD, 2000) has found that by increasing children’s vocabulary development and background knowledge their comprehension will improve.

Researchers like Marzano, Beck, McKeown, Blachowicz, and Fisher, have examined the type of vocabulary words that should be taught to children in the primary grades and have examined the best practices when teaching new vocabulary to students. According to Blachowicz and Fisher (2011), “listening to books that are read aloud helps students to go beyond their existing oral vocabularies and presents them with new concepts and vocabulary” (p. 227).

Researchers have also found that building students’ vocabulary helps to increase their background knowledge and allows students to better comprehend and understand what they have read. This chapter will present the research behind background knowledge or schema, effective researched-based vocabulary instruction used in
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classrooms today, and research that supports the use of read-alouds as a way to build students background knowledge and vocabulary in the primary classroom. A review of the literature that informed this study focused on three specific areas of literacy research.

1. Schema theory and foundational research in vocabulary
2. Vocabulary instruction
3. Read-alouds

**Schema Theory and Foundational Research in Vocabulary**

Tracey and Morrow (2012) defined Schema theory “as a constructivist theory that explains how knowledge is created and used by learners” (p. 62). The important characteristics of schema theory are that everyone’s schema is individualized, and knowledge structures are pliant and expandable. According to Tracey and Morrow, Schema theory has three processes: (1) accretation where learners take in new information but do not change existing schemata, (2) tuning where the existing schemata is modified to incorporate new information, and (3) restructuring where new schema is created because the old one is no longer sufficient (p. 63). Tracey and Morrow stated that students use their schemata for developing content and growing in the reading processes. “In Schema Theory students actively construct and revise their schemata as they read and learn” (Tracey & Morrow, 2012, p. 64). Students are constantly constructing and revising their schemata as they read, and instruction related to the reading processes is valuable when developing the students schemata, teachers should build background knowledge before reading with the students (p.63).

Justice, Meier, and Walpole (2005) described theoretical perspectives on vocabulary development in their article about learning new words from storybooks. They
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described three vocabulary processes on which they focused their study: (1) novel word learning through incidental exposure, (2) novel word learning as a gradual process, and (3) novel word learning as a developmental process influenced by adult input variations (p.18). Justice, Meier, and Walpole described *incidental exposures* as “situations in which children informally experience unknown words” (p. 18). This occurs when a child hears a word after listening to a story, watching television, listening to the radio etc. Novel word learning was described as “a gradual process in which word representations progressively develop from immature, incomplete representations to mature, accurate representations” (p. 18). During Novel word learning as a developmental process, adult input influenced children when they were exposed to new words because of their interactions with adults (p. 19).

Researchers Little and Box (2011) have also found evidence that supports the use of building children’s schema. In their study on how graphic organizers impact schema theory, they found that schemata accounts for “how we organize and store information in our brains and arrange this information to allow us to gain knowledge concerning new concepts presented to us” (pp. 25-26). In addition, Little and Box (2011) found that many students struggle with text-based curriculums because they lack background knowledge in order to relate to the vocabulary and comprehend the story. Little and Box (2011) noticed “daily reading exercises become a more daunting task due to their lack of tools (prior knowledge and experiences related to the concepts being taught and read)” (p. 24). When reading becomes difficult for students to understand and make connections with, then teachers need to start to find strategies to build and expand their schema. The
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authors stated, “Since prior knowledge is essential for the comprehension of new knowledge, teachers need to assist students in building prerequisite knowledge” (p.25).

Since prior knowledge is needed in order for students to comprehend the story and many students appear to lack prior knowledge, researchers Hart and Risley (2003) began researching where the lack of vocabulary and background knowledge began. They started observing what was happening in the homes of economically disadvantaged children. Hart and Risley (2003) observed 42 families from different socio-economic statuses, and recorded the words used by parents and the children in the home. Their goal was to discover what was happening in the children’s early experience that may have been contributing to the vocabulary gap that was found among the different socio-economic statuses. Hart and Risley collected data by the using one-hour observations once a month through the use of recordings and transcriptions of their observations. After the study was completed, Hart and Risley also did a follow up on 29 of the students when they were in third grade. The researchers found, “families on welfare not only had smaller vocabularies than did children of the same age in professional families, but they were also adding words more slowly” (p. 114). The researchers also found “86 percent to 98 percent of the words recorded in each child’s vocabulary consisted of words also recorded in their parents’ vocabularies” (p.112). These data showed “the average child on welfare was having half as much experience per hour (616 words per hour) as the average working class child (1,251 words per hour) and less than one-third that the average child in a professional family (2,153 words per hour” (p.116). Based on this study, Hart and Risley found that because so much is happening in those first three years and
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children are relying on the parents for all their experiences, by age three an intervention must address the gaps in background knowledge and exposure to words (p. 117).

Along with Hart and Risley, Little and Box (2011) found evidence that supports the use of parents talking and exposing their children to vocabulary during the early stages of their development. Little and Box (2011) found that, “A mother who reads, sings and talks to the child during the prenatal period is very much presenting the child with early acquisition of sounds and speech” (p. 25). Little and Box discovered that by doing this, a mother is allowing for early literacy to be stored permanently in the child’s schemata. Research like this supports what others have found when it comes to developing children’s schema and background knowledge during the early years of development which is the importance of parent and child talk and the impact of socio-economic status. Researchers Little and Box (2011) stated, “a most critical span of time occurs from the day of birth to ages of four and five in which the child, with intense acquisition, begins to store countless concepts in the brain” (p. 25). Overall, children’s schema helps them when reading and comprehending new material because, as Little and Box found, “a reader’s prior knowledge and experiences about events, concepts, vocabulary, and objects described in a text passage can have a significant influence on the meaning the student obtains from the text passage” (p. 26).

The research behind children’s background knowledge proved to play a significant role in the reading processes of young children. The above researchers have all found that the most prominent time to influence children’s schema happens during those early years spent at home. These researchers have found that it is important for parents to talk and expose their children to vocabulary and background knowledge that
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will help them become successful readers. The next section of this review will look at research based vocabulary instruction used in classrooms today.

**Vocabulary Instruction**

Hart and Risley’s (2003) study motivated the researcher into finding the best ways to teach vocabulary in order to help students close the vocabulary gap. The topics of vocabulary instruction in basal reading series and methods of vocabulary instruction are addressed in the following sections.

**Vocabulary in basal reading series.** Wright and Neuman (2013) examined vocabulary instruction provided by core reading material. Wright and Neuman found that it is important to examine models for teaching vocabulary in the classroom in order to supplement existing reading programs. The researchers looked at the teacher’s editions in four core reading curriculums which included *Houghton Mifflin Reading Street, Scott Foresman Reading, Harcourt Trophies*, and *Treasures* (p. 390). Wright and Neuman wanted find how many words were being taught, the difficulty level of the words, and the instructional regime that each of the reading programs followed. They looked at those areas of vocabulary instruction because research has shown that in order to have effective vocabulary instruction, those three elements need to be researched and followed. Wright and Neuman found that “across all programs, there were few opportunities to learn challenging words, and there was little systematic instruction to support learning or retention” (p. 402). With these being commonly used reading programs in schools today and finding that the instruction is not sufficiently supporting word learning or retention, the researcher began looking at other forms of vocabulary instruction that can enhance reading programs such as these.
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**Popular vocabulary instructional strategies.** First the researcher looked at Berne and Blachowicz’s (2008) study on what reading teachers were saying about vocabulary instruction. Berne and Blachowicz asked teachers to provide their questions and concerns on vocabulary instruction. The authors surveyed 72 educators, 21 from a Listserve survey and 51 from a professional meeting. Berne and Blachowicz (2008) noted several concerns of the respondents. The number one concern was, “How can we develop a consistent approach to vocabulary learning in my building/district?” (p.319). This was a need that many teachers were struggling with especially when the students are coming into the classroom with a lack of background knowledge that influences the students’ understanding of the story.

Based on the survey, it was found that among the most cited instructional strategies were read-alouds and songs as well as games and play. These strategies have proven to be effective for the primary grades, and research has suggested that they were not only valuable for struggling readers but for students who were English Language Learners (ELLs) as well. Silverman (2007) found “many children whose home language is not English have more limited English Vocabularies compared to their monolingual English peers” (p. 98). Since struggling readers who speak English only are not the only ones needing their vocabularies enriched, other researchers like Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, and Vaughn (2004) researched vocabulary strategies using storybook reading. Hickman et al. found, “the success of this story read-aloud practice for the increased comprehension and oral language development of English Language Learners is dependent not only on the teacher’s selection of texts and vocabulary words but also the implementation of the lesson design” (p. 725). These researchers followed a lesson
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design that included introducing the story and three new vocabulary words on day one. On days two, three, and four the researchers reread the story passage and reviewed the vocabulary words. On day five the researchers extended the comprehension and focused attention on a more in-depth look on three of the vocabulary words.

**Marzano’s six-step process.** One researcher who designed another procedure to teach vocabulary was Marzano (2010), and this is the six-step process for teaching vocabulary.

1. The teacher provides a description, explanation, or example of the new term.
2. Students restate the explanation of the new term in their own words.
3. Students create a nonlinguistic representation of the term.
4. Students periodically engage in activities that help them add to their knowledge of the vocabulary term.
5. Periodically, students are asked to discuss terms with one another.
6. Periodically, students are involved in games that allow them to play with the terms. (p. 23)

Marzano (2010) broke down his six step process into three phases, (1) the introductory phase teaching vocabulary terms which involves the first three steps, (2) the comparison phase helping the students develop the distinctions between the meaning of the new words, (3) The review and refinement phase this is where teachers expand students understanding to the term (p. 24). Marzano’s six-step process used a variety of approaches to vocabulary instruction that addressed the range of word knowledge, linguistic background, learning styles, and literacy abilities existing in today’s classrooms.
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Similar to Marzano’s six-step process, Blachowicz and Fisher (2011) recommended a six step guideline for teaching vocabulary instruction.

1. Build a word-rich environment
2. Develop independent word learners.
3. Use instructional strategies.
4. Provide explicit instruction for important content and concept vocabulary.
5. Use assessments that match the goal of instruction.
6. Integrate vocabulary instruction across the curriculum. (p. 225)

Blachowicz and Fisher stated, “teachers are increasingly faced with a diverse group of learners in terms of current word knowledge, linguistic background, learning styles, and literacy abilities” (p. 225).

Effective vocabulary instruction. Additional studies support how to effectively teach vocabulary in the classroom. Coyne and Byrnes (2007) did an action research study on ways to engage children with useful vocabulary words in a third grade classroom. Coyne and Byrnes followed Beck and McKeown’s teaching on tier two words with activities to help students develop deeper understanding of the words. In the study, the authors wanted to find what instructional procedures for vocabulary support children’s use of literacy, and how instructional strategies for teaching vocabulary differ in supporting third grade children using vocabulary in oral and written communication. Coyne and Byrnes found that children in the instruction group had learned more vocabulary words than students in the traditional group. Group two had learned four to five more words per week, whereas group one had learned an average of two more words per week. Coyne and Byrnes (2007) concluded that reading aloud
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accompanied by explanation of unfamiliar words as they occur in the story to be an
effective method of teaching children the meaning of words (p. 287).

Another example of effective vocabulary instruction is the idea of teaching depth
vs. breadth. In the article by Coyne, McCoach, Loftus, Zipoli, and Kapp (2009), they
compare and contrast breadth vs. depth through direct instruction in a kindergarten
classroom. Coyne et al. (2009) describe teaching vocabulary for breadth as the embedded
vocabulary instructional approach that focuses on teaching many word meanings without
in-depth discussion. Depth is described as the opposite; it is the extended vocabulary
instruction, and this instructional approach provides students with extended opportunities
to discuss and interact with words outside story readings (p. 2). Other researchers like
Beck, McKeown and Kucan (2002) have developed and followed strategies for teaching
with depth over breadth. Beck et al. feel that choosing two to three tier two words allows
the students to use the words in many contexts (p. 70).

Robust vocabulary instruction. Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002) provided a
framework for teaching vocabulary. They designed a robust vocabulary instruction,
which is defined as “instruction that offers rich information about words and their uses,
provides frequent and varied opportunities for students to think about and use words, and
enhances students’ language comprehension and production” (p. 2). Beck et al. suggested
that teachers include the following steps when using robust vocabulary instruction: (1)
choosing words to teach (2) introducing vocabulary (3) developing vocabulary (4)
making the most of the natural contexts (5) enriching the verbal environment.

When choosing words to teach, Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002) focused on
looking at the three different tiers of words. Tier One words are the most basic words,
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Tier Two are high frequency words, and Tier Three words included words whose frequency is quite low. The authors recommend providing instruction on Tier Two words because “the instruction of these words can add productively to an individual’s language ability” (p. 16).

For the identification of tier two words, Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002) recommend the following criteria: (1) importance and utility (2) instructional potential, (3) conceptual understanding (p. 19). *Importance and utility* is described by the researchers as, “words that are characteristic of mature language users and appear frequently across a variety of domains” (p. 19). *Instructional potential* is described by the researchers as, “Words that can be worked with in a variety of ways so that students can build rich representations of them and of their connections to other words and concepts” (p. 19). *Conceptual understanding* is described as “Words for which students understand the general concept but provide precision and specificity in describing the concept” (p. 19).

For introducing the vocabulary to students, Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002) provide four steps to follow: (1) provide initial word meaning information through definition, (2) provide meaning information through instructional contexts, (3) provide meaning as words are encountered, (4) engage students in dealing with word meanings (pp. 32-44). When providing initial word meaning information the researchers suggest making sure that instructors develop student friendly explanations of the words by (1) characterizing the word and (2) explaining the meanings in everyday language (pp. 35-36). The authors described instructional contexts as “contexts that have been developed with the intention of providing strong clues to a word’s meaning” (p. 39). The researchers
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found four ways in which educators can engage students with word meanings: (1) word associations, (2) have you ever, (3) applause and (4) idea completions (pp.44-45). Beck et al. used word associations by “asking students to associate one of their new words with a presented word or phrase” (p. 44). They used have you ever as a way to have the students associate words using their own experiences (p. 45). In Applause “the students clap in order to indicate how much they would like to be described by the target words” (p. 45). Idea completions “provide students with sentence stems that required them to integrate a word’s meaning into a context in order to explain the situation” (p. 45).

When developing the vocabulary for the primary grades Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002) recommend the following basic instructional sequence

1. Read the story.
2. Contextualize the word within the story.
3. Have the children say the word.
4. Provide a student-friendly explanation of the word.
5. Present examples of the word used in contexts different from the story context.
6. Engage children in activities that get them to interact with the words.
7. Have children say the word. (pp. 65-66)

When reviewing this literature, it is apparent that researchers have found many different frameworks for vocabulary instruction as described in this section. A common strategy, which is used to develop vocabulary especially in the primary grades, is the use of read-alouds. The next section will describe specifically how read-alouds are being used to expand students’ background knowledge and vocabulary.
Using Teacher Read-Alouds

**Read-Alouds**

Researchers like Justice, Meier, and Walpole (2005) along with Kindle (2009) have found that reading aloud to children not only provides a rich context for word learning but gives children a vehicle for learning unknown words. In the primary grades, reading aloud to students happens frequently if not daily throughout the school year. Since many students who live in economically disadvantaged homes along with students who speak English as a second language may have been exposed to fewer words in their homes, it is important to find a way to close the gap and provide students opportunities to build upon their vocabulary. Research is showing that use of read-alouds is one way teachers can build students’ vocabulary. Kindle (2009) found “Read-alouds fill the gap by exposing children to book language, which is rich in unusual words and descriptive language” (p. 202). Kindle found research for how children acquire new vocabulary but very little research for how teachers teach new words as they read aloud. Kindle’s research determined that “Teachers must select appropriate texts, identify words for instruction, and choose strategies that facilitate word learning” (p. 202). Research has also shown that read-alouds can help to impact a reader’s comprehension, vocabulary and oral language. Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, and Vaughn (2004) found in their study that “teacher read-alouds are perhaps the most consistent activity used by classroom teachers that provides frequent, if not daily, opportunities to enhance literacy of ELLs by integrating effective vocabulary development practices” (p. 721). According to Hickman et al. (2004), there are five elements to story read-alouds, (1) introducing and previewing the story and vocabulary words, (2) reading a passage from the story, (3) rereading the passage, (4) extending comprehension, and (5) summarizing what was read (p. 725). Research by Kindle (2009) and Hickman et al. (2004) showed that by using these read-
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Aloud elements along with selecting appropriate text and identifying words, students can learn the vocabulary needed in order to extend their comprehension.

In a study by Baker, Chard, Fien, Park, and Otterstedt (2013), the authors evaluated the use of a read-aloud intervention to improve comprehension and vocabulary in a first grade classroom. This intervention used 12 teachers who participated in a read aloud intervention using both narrative and expository texts. The authors measured both listening comprehension outcomes and expressive outcomes. The authors targeted students who were at risk for language or literacy difficulties. Baker et al. (2013) found that read-aloud interventions had significant effects on student’s narrative retellings and vocabulary outcomes (p. 346).

Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002) researched ways to build vocabulary through robust vocabulary instruction. In their research, they found that teachers needed to build the vocabulary of beginning readers by extending instruction beyond what the students are able to read. Most of the books the young students are required to read include tier 1 words, but the authors found that young children can “understand much more sophisticated content presented in oral language than they can read independently.” (p. 48). These researchers found that since young children’s listening and speaking skills were more advanced, teachers should read-aloud trade books. By listening to read-alouds, students have an opportunity to build the background knowledge needed to understand vocabulary in texts. Beck, McKeown, and Kucan recommended, “that after a story has been read the teacher can describe a character or incident with an interesting word” (p. 48). When teachers do this, the students then begin to make connections to words and in turn learn new vocabulary.
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Another study that supported the use of read-alouds was conducted by Silverman (2007) on the comparison of vocabulary instruction during read-alouds in kindergarten. Silverman examined three different methods for promoting children’s word learning: (1) contextualized instruction (2) contextualized instruction augmented by analytical instruction, and (3) contextualized instruction augmented by analytical instruction and anchored instruction. Silverman used a quasi-experimental design through a six-week storybook vocabulary intervention in six kindergarten classrooms. In this study, each teacher followed a three-day lesson plan format using the same children’s books and targeted vocabulary words. On day 1, Silverman had the teacher read the book while stopping on pages to target instruction on certain words, day 2 she had the teacher read the book without stopping and then ask questions about target words in the book after the reading, and on day 3 the teacher did not read the book but had the students retell the story (p. 101). Silverman found, “to teach children sophisticated words, teachers should use activities that structure students’ opportunities to analyze and use those words in many contexts” (p. 109).

Since read-alouds have been found to play an important role in the primary classrooms and many teachers read-aloud everyday, researchers like Silverman (2007) have found “that engaging children in active analysis of word meanings is more effective at promoting their learning of new words to the context of a story” (Silverman, 2007, p.107). Researchers like Silverman (2007), Hickman et al. (2004), and Beck et al. (2002) have found that it is important to remember that when reading-aloud, teachers should following a similar format each time such as, (1) discussing the unknown vocabulary
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words, (2) limiting the vocabulary words to around 2-4 words, (3) rereading the story, and (4) asking questions.

Summary

The research has shown that there are many ways to help enhance a student’s vocabulary development. In order begin building on a student’s vocabulary knowledge, teachers must first understand the student’s schema or background knowledge, then begin finding vocabulary that will enhance their word knowledge in an in-depth way, and finally follow a research-based instructional regime. After researching the use of read-alouds in the classroom and effective vocabulary strategies, the researcher began setting up the research questions and design of the study. Chapter 3 describes the design of the study.
Chapter Three

Methodology

The researcher planned to investigate how read-alouds using picture books containing additional teacher-selected vocabulary impacted struggling first grade students’ reading comprehension. She also wanted to determine how read-alouds using picture books containing teacher-selected vocabulary from the basal reader impacted vocabulary development of struggling first grade students. This chapter describes the design, participants, and procedures that the researcher used in the study.

Research Design

In order to answer the research questions, the researcher used an exploratory mixed methods design, using both quantitative and qualitative data (Mertler, 2014, p.104). For qualitative data, the researcher conducted student conferences with retellings once a week to assess how well the students were able to apply the weekly researcher-selected vocabulary words. For quantitative data the researcher administered a weekly pre- and post-test on all vocabulary words that were taught during the research. The teacher scored the students’ tests based on the amount of words they knew and understood before and after teacher read-alouds. She also used the weekly comprehension test scores of the basal reading series to note any changes in scores. The researcher analyzed the scores (number correct out of ten) earned by students on the comprehension
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tests before and during the study. A third source of quantitative data was the numerical score earned on the retellings.

Using an exploratory mixed methods approach was appropriate for this study because the researcher gained qualitative data on students’ reading comprehension and vocabulary development. The quantitative data were used to show an in-depth look at how the read-aloud impacted the students' vocabulary development and comprehension scores.

Participants

The study was conducted in a first grade classroom in one of ten elementary schools in an urban school district located in the Midwest. The first grade classroom was a self-contained classroom where all subjects were taught throughout the day. The first grade classroom included 20 students total, fourteen boys and seven girls. Four of the students were receiving English as a second language (ESL) service. The researcher collected data from six students who were identified as struggling readers based on their weekly comprehension and vocabulary test scores, along with the STARS reading assessment and DRA scores. The whole class received the read aloud intervention and took the tests, however, data were collected only from the six selected students.

The six students who were selected for data collection purposes were identified as “needing intervention” according to the STARS reading assessment and DRA used by the district and based on scores obtained in December of 2014. All six students had also been placed on a reading improvement monitoring plan (RIMP). Student one was a seven-year-old white female whose DRA level fell within the kindergarten range and STARS result indicated, “needing urgent intervention.” Student two was a seven-year-old
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Hispanic male whose DRA level fell within kindergarten range and STARS results indicated, “needing urgent intervention.” Student three was a seven-year-old white male whose DRA level fell within the kindergarten range and STARS results indicated needing urgent intervention. Student four was an eight-year-old African American male who was repeating first grade. His DRA level fell within the beginning first grade range and STARS results indicated needing intervention. Student five was a seven-year-old African American female whose DRA level fell within the beginning first grade range and STARS results indicated needing intervention. Student six was a seven-year-old Hispanic male whose DRA level fell within the beginning first grade range and STARS results indicated needing intervention. All six of the students were receiving Title I tutoring services four days a week for 50 minutes.

Setting

The researcher’s literacy block was conducted in the morning from 9:00 am to 10:45 am. The classroom consisted of a student library where the books were leveled A-I according to the Fountas and Pinnell leveling system. During the opening period of the reading block (9:00 am to 9:30 am), the researcher either administered the pre/post test, read aloud one of the two read-alouds selected for the week, or read the main story from the *Journeys* basal reader (Baumann et al., 2011) for the week. During the read-alouds, the students sat in the carpet area that was in front of the white boards. The vocabulary words were displayed along with the weekly target skill and basal reading focus wall. During the pre/post test the students remained at their desks and were given folders to put up on their desks to keep others from looking at their papers. When reading the weekly story from the *Journeys* series, the students remained at their desks and were asked to
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read the story along with the researcher. The main story was also displayed on the document camera so the students could see the page the class was reading.

**Intervention / Treatment**

The researcher conducted the study during an eight-week period starting March 16, 2015 and concluding the week of May 4, 2015. The researcher conducted the study for six of the eight weeks because of spring break the week of March 30 and benchmark testing the week of April 20. At the beginning of each week, the researcher gave a pre-test in which all students circled the vocabulary word that matched the picture shown on the pre-test. Each picture had three word choices from which the students could choose. After the students completed the pre-assessment on Monday, the researcher read aloud one of the two picture books to the entire class. The first picture book was reread on Tuesday and the second picture book was read on Wednesday and Thursday. The researcher discussed the read-alouds and teacher-selected vocabulary words multiple times throughout the week. At the end of the week, the researcher gave the usual basal reading tests to all students, administered the vocabulary post-test to all students, and met with three of six selected students individually along with three randomly selected students and checked their reading comprehension of the *Journeys* story using a retelling rubric. This was done to see if the students were able to apply the vocabulary to their comprehension and to see if the students used any of the new vocabulary when retelling the story. Table 1 presents the rotation of the students as they were assessed with an oral retelling of the stories.
Using Teacher Read-Alouds

Table 1

*Rotation of Students for Journeys Story Retelling*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>April 20</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>1, 2, 3</th>
<th>4, 5, 6</th>
<th>Spring Break</th>
<th>4, 5, 6</th>
<th>1, 2, 3</th>
<th>Benchmark Testing</th>
<th>1, 2, 4, 5, 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-</td>
<td>7, 8, 9</td>
<td>10, 11,</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td>13, 16,</td>
<td>Benchmark Testing</td>
<td>19, 8, 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participants</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Break 14, 15</td>
<td>17, 18</td>
<td></td>
<td>20, 7, 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students 4, 5, 6 conferenced on two consecutive weeks because the week of March 23 the students retold a non-fiction story and the week of April 6 students retold a fiction story, if they would have waited until the week of April 13 they would have retold two consecutive non-fiction stories.

**Data Collection**

The researcher collected qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of sources. The qualitative data came from the comments recorded by the researcher on the retelling rubric. The quantitative data came from the scores from weekly *Journeys* (Baumann et al., 2011) basal series comprehension test, the numerical scores on the retelling rubric, and teacher created vocabulary pre and post-tests.
Using Teacher Read-Alouds

**Basal reading series comprehension.** The comprehension tests were comprised of 10 multiple-choice questions, and the students had three answer choices per question. The comprehension questions were read aloud to the whole class, and the students chose the answer that best answered the question. The students were allowed to take as much time as needed to answer the questions. Each test took an average of 10-20 minutes to complete. In Appendix A is an example of a comprehension test with three of the four researcher-selected vocabulary words from the week underlined.

**Retelling rubric.** The researcher used the Fiction or Nonfiction Retelling Scoring Form from the Reading A-Z website (http://www.readinga-z.com) and asked students to retell the main story in the basal reader. Appendix B is an example of the fiction retelling form and Appendix C is an example of the non-fiction retelling form. The retelling rubric consisted of six key elements that were scored on a three point system. Three points were given for a completely detailed retell, two points were given for a partial retell, one point was given for a fragmentary or sketchy retell, and zero points were given for an inaccurate retell. The researcher provided up to five to six prompts to help the student with the retell. The students were also scored for amount of prompting they needed. The students were given one point for high prompting, two points for medium prompting, and three points for no prompting. The researcher added the total number of points earned for all elements. The students were leveled as either skilled, developing, or needs work. In order for the student to be skilled, the total must range between 15-21 points, developing is 8-14 points, and needs work fell within 0-7 points. Appendix D is the completed fiction retelling form and Appendix E is the completed non-fiction retelling form.
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In addition to the numerical scoring on the rubrics, the researcher wrote comments and any weekly vocabulary words that were used by the student. The researcher then reviewed the comments for each student and looked for similar patterns and words that most of the students used during the retelling.

**Teacher-created check of vocabulary.** The researcher selected weekly vocabulary words by examining the *Journeys* basal reading stories (Baumann et al., 2011), along with vocabulary that was used in the *Journeys* Comprehension tests. Weekly pre/post vocabulary checks were given to the entire class. All students were given a sheet with four pictures and were instructed to select the vocabulary word that went with the picture from three word choices. Students received scores of the number correct out of four. Appendix F is an example of one of the pre/post tests that was given during the study. While all students participated in the pre/post test, data were collected only from the six students participating in the study.

**Data Analysis**

**Basal reading series comprehension tests.** Scores on weekly *Journeys* (Baumann et al., 2011) tests four weeks before the intervention served as baseline data on students’ comprehension performance. After the intervention was implemented, the researcher continued to record test scores and compared scores from the comprehension tests during baseline and intervention. The researcher examined the test scores to see if the students’ weekly comprehension test scores changed after the read aloud strategy was put in place.
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**Retelling rubric.** The researcher analyzed the numerical scores of the six selected students’ retellings of the stories over the six-week study to determine if the students made any changes in their comprehension. The researcher analyzed each element of the rubric to uncover patterns in students’ responses along with vocabulary words that were used.

The researcher also looked at notes recorded during students’ retellings to determine what elements of the story the students struggled with, along with looking at all the retellings over time to see any areas of growth. Next the researcher compared and contrasted the fiction and non-fiction retellings to see if there were any differences between the two types of texts.

**Teacher-created check of vocabulary.** The researcher compared and contrasted each week’s pre and post-test to determine if the read aloud strategy might have helped students learn new vocabulary words related to the weekly story. The researcher graphed the results of both the pre- and post-test and looked for changes in the students’ vocabulary development.

**Procedures**

To begin this study, the researcher contacted the elementary school principal and presented the proposed action research project. The researcher discussed with the principal the benefits of this action research project and gained the principal’s approval as well as IRB approval from Wittenberg University. After receiving approval, on February 19, 2015, the researcher sent home letters of consent (see Appendix G). Two of the letters of consent were translated from English to Spanish with the help of the districts English
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as a Second Language (ESL) translator (see Appendix H). There were no objections by parents to their children participating in the study. With approval, the researcher began the study.

This study started the week of March 16, 2015, with Lesson 21 in the *Journeys* (Baumann et al., 2011) basal reading series and ended the week of May 4, 2015 with Lesson 27 of in the *Journeys* basal reading series. The researcher followed a five-day plan while conducting the study for each lesson in the *Journeys* basal reading series. Table 2 shows an overview of the researcher’s weekly schedule.
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Table 2

**Weekly Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of</th>
<th>Journeys Story</th>
<th>Picture book 1</th>
<th>Picture Book 2</th>
<th>Teacher selected vocab</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>March 16, 2015</strong></td>
<td>Lesson 21 “The Tree” from <em>Poppleton Forever</em></td>
<td><em>Tom’s Tree</em></td>
<td><em>The Seasons of Arnold’s Apple Tree</em></td>
<td>Tree stake, branches, tree trunk, bird feeder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>March 23, 2015</strong></td>
<td>Lesson 22 “Amazing Animals”</td>
<td><em>All about African Wildlife</em></td>
<td><em>Places Plants and Animals Live</em></td>
<td>Quills, tusks, desert, flippers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>March 30, 2015</strong></td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>April 6, 2015</strong></td>
<td>Lesson 23 “Whistle For Willie”</td>
<td><em>Apt. 3</em></td>
<td><em>Letter to Amy</em></td>
<td>Carton, chalk, sidewalk, shadow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>April 13, 2015</strong></td>
<td>Lesson 24 “A Butterfly Grows”</td>
<td><em>Monarch Butterfly</em></td>
<td><em>Monarch and Milkweed</em></td>
<td>Chrysalis, insects, caterpillar, milkweed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>April 20, 2015</strong></td>
<td>Benchmark Testing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>April 27, 2015</strong></td>
<td>Lesson 26 “The Dot”</td>
<td><em>Ish</em></td>
<td><em>Art</em></td>
<td>Frame, drawing, watercolors, swirl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>May 4, 2015</strong></td>
<td>Lesson 27 What Can You Do?</td>
<td><em>Let’s Play Soccer</em></td>
<td><em>My Teacher Can Teach Anyone</em></td>
<td>Practice, discovered, floating, violin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Day one. The teacher selected vocabulary pre-test was given to all students on Monday morning from 9:00-9:30 am during the opening period of the literacy block. The students remained in their seats and were instructed to look at the pictures on the left and choose one of the three words on the right that matched each picture. When the students finished the pre-test, the researcher had the students turn the pre-test in and instructed them to come sit on the carpet. The researcher then introduced the weekly learning target for reading along with the teacher-selected vocabulary words. The researcher held up a
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full-page version of each picture that represented one of the four teacher selected-vocabulary words and asked the students if they knew the picture. The researcher would confirm or expand upon the students’ knowledge for each vocabulary word. The researcher would then introduce picture book one and read it aloud to the students. The researcher would pause to help build background knowledge and comprehension throughout the story. The researcher encouraged the students to stop and ask questions about words they did not understand. After the first read aloud was completed, the researcher then asked follow up questions and had the students practice a think-pair-share activity with one another.

The researcher then moved into the introducing the main story from the *Journeys* (Baumann et al., 2011) basal reader. The teacher would have the students go back to their seats and get out their basal reading books and turn to the first page of the *Journeys* story for the week. The researcher gave a summary of what the story was going to be about and then had the students listen and follow along as she read the story. Once again the researcher encouraged students to stop and think about the story and ask any questions they had. The researcher paused and asked comprehension questions to help build meaning to the story. The researcher also paused on the vocabulary words and had students find pictures and give examples of the words. After reading the main story, the researcher then moved into weekly comprehension skill and expanded comprehension through the *Journeys* graphic organizers. The rest of the reading block contained, students working in centers and participating in small guided-reading groups.

**Day two.** The researcher began the study once again in the opening period of the literacy block. The students were instructed to come sit on the carpet where the
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researcher reviewed the teacher-selected vocabulary words with the students. The researcher once again held up the picture of each teacher selected-vocabulary word and asked the students what the word was. After that the teacher had the students work in pairs to either share an example of the word or use the word in a sentence. The researcher then read aloud picture book one for the second time, and had the students listen for any of the teacher selected vocabulary words. The students were also encouraged the students to ask more questions or offer comments about the story to help build their reading comprehension.

The researcher then had the students return to their seats and open their basal reader to the main Journeys story. During this reading the students were asked to echo read the story along with the researcher. After reading both stories, the researcher asked the students how the two stories were alike and how they were different in order to expand their reading comprehension. The students then worked in pairs to complete a writing prompt that connected with the theme of the story before moving into the daily literacy centers.

**Day three.** The researcher started the literacy block by having the students come to the carpet where the vocabulary words and target skill was reviewed. The researcher chose a student to come up and give a sentence or definition to each vocabulary word on the board. After reviewing the vocabulary words the researcher then read aloud picture book number two. The researcher gave a brief summary of the story and continued to encourage the students to ask questions and make comments during the read aloud. The researcher also paused throughout the story to ask questions and clarify meaning of the vocabulary words. When the story was complete, the students shared their questions and
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comments about the story. The researcher then asked several comprehension questions and had the students work in pairs to answer them.

The students were then instructed to stay in their pairs and read the main story from the basal reader. After reading the story together the students were given a writing prompt to complete, where they were encouraged to use but not required to use the new vocabulary words in their writing. After completing that task, the students then moved into their literacy centers.

**Day four.** The morning began by having the students come to the carpet where the researcher reviewed the new vocabulary words and learning target. The researcher read aloud picture book two once again. The researcher encouraged the students to listen for the vocabulary words or look for examples of the vocabulary words in the pictures. The researcher paused throughout the story once again pointing out vocabulary words and asking comprehension questions to strengthen the student’s comprehension and background knowledge. After the read-aloud was completed, the students went back to their seats and were instructed to open their basal reader to the main story. This time the class read the story together in a choral read. When the reading was completed, the students moved into their literacy centers.

**Day five.** The morning started off with the researcher instructing all students to complete the teacher-selected vocabulary post-test and follow the same routine as they did on the pre-test. After completing the post-test, the students then got out their *Journeys* (Baumann et al., 2011) basal reader and opened the book to the main *Journeys* story for the week. The students then listened and followed along with the story on tape. Afterwards the researcher broke the students into two teams and played a story review
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game with the students. The researcher would have one student from each team come to
the front of the room and asked the students a comprehension question from the main
*Journeys* story. When the game was completed, the researcher gave the students the
*Journeys* comprehension test. The researcher read each question aloud and had the
students fill in one of the circles from the three choices provided that best answered the
question. The researcher then moved the students into their literacy centers, and during
this time the researcher began to meet one-on-one with six students, three who were part
of the study and three who were randomly selected. The students then were asked to retell
the main *Journeys* story. The researcher used the retelling form from the Reading A-Z
website. When the students struggled, the researcher would give the suggested prompts to
help them strengthen their retelling. The researcher also took notes on any vocabulary
words that the students used during the retelling, along with making other notes about
areas where the students showed strength and weaknesses.

The research concluded during the week of May 4, 2015, with the final read-aloud
stories, vocabulary tests, and retellings for the study.

**Summary**

The purpose of this study was to identify the impact that read-alouds had on
students’ reading comprehension and vocabulary development. With procedures clearly
planned and implemented, data collection began. Upon completion of the data collection,
the researcher began to analyze the data and interpret the results. Chapter Four presents
the findings of this study.
Chapter Four

Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The purpose of this study was to see if read-alouds that aligned to the *Journeys* (Baumann et al., 2011) basal reading series and the teacher-selected vocabulary words impacted students’ comprehension and vocabulary. To determine the impact of the study, the researcher selected six struggling readers based on their weekly scores on the *Journeys* comprehension tests and their DRA and STARS reading assessments. All students in the classroom participated in the study, however, only the six selected students’ data were analyzed. The study lasted eight weeks although the study was conducted for only six of the eight weeks due to spring break and benchmark testing. The researcher started the study on March 16, 2015, and ending the study the week of May 4, 2015, and collected data from the *Journeys* comprehension test, the teacher selected vocabulary pre/post-test, and an oral retelling of the *Journeys* story. The following sections present the results from the data collection that addressed each of the two research questions.

**How do read-alouds using picture books containing additional teacher-selected vocabulary impact struggling first grade students’ understanding of the stories in the basal reader?**

The researcher collected data to evaluate how read-alouds using pictures books containing additional teacher-selected vocabulary impacted struggling first grade
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students’ comprehension of the *Journeys* (Baumann et al., 2011) story. The first set of data was taken from the weekly *Journeys* comprehension tests, which used a multiple choice format with three selections. Table 3 displays the number of correct responses out of 10 from baseline and intervention comprehension scores.

Table 3

*Scores on Journeys Weekly Comprehension Test*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>B1</th>
<th>B2</th>
<th>B3</th>
<th>B4</th>
<th>I1</th>
<th>I2</th>
<th>I3</th>
<th>I4</th>
<th>I5</th>
<th>I6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: B indicates baseline score, I indicates scores during the intervention phases of the study.

Table 3 shows that during intervention 4, all students except for student 5 decreased in their scores. This intervention basal story was a non-fiction text about the life cycle of the butterfly. The comprehension test asked several sequencing questions about the story. This table also shows that during intervention 6, all students except for student 3 went down in their scores. This intervention basal story was another non-fiction
intervention about discovering talents. The comprehension skill for the week was identifying text and graphic features. The comprehension test asked specific questions about different graphic features that were included in the text. Both selections on which the students scored lower were non-fiction texts and the test contained several questions related to the skill of the week.

During the intervention period, students 5 and 6 showed higher scores on a consistent basis. Student 6 showed the most improvement with three perfect scores during the intervention 2, 3, and 5, and although student 5 did not have a perfect score during the intervention period, he/she received 9/10 during interventions 2, 4, and 5. Intervention story 2 was a non-fiction text, where interventions stories 3 and 5 were fiction texts. Student 4 also showed improvement in his/her score until intervention six where his/her score decreased. Student two had his/her highest score during the intervention along with his lowest score. During Interventions stories 2 and 5, two students received perfect scores on their comprehension. At no time during baseline did 2 students out of 6 get perfect scores.

Table 4 displays the total points recorded for students’ retellings of the weekly Journeys (Baumann et al., 2011) stories. On the Fiction or Nonfiction Retelling Scoring Form from Reading A-Z, the students could receive a total of 21 points on the retelling. The retellings first had a total of six elements that were scored. The students received a three if they gave a completed and detailed response for the element, a two if they gave a partial response, a one for a fragmentary response, and a zero if the response was inaccurate or omitted. Second, the students were also scored for the level a prompting they received, one was given for high prompting, two was given for medium prompting
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and 3 was given for no prompting. Those two types of scores were totaled to equal the 21 possible points on the retelling rubric.

Table 4

*Total Points on Retelling Scoring Forms*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>R1</th>
<th>R2</th>
<th>R3</th>
<th>R4</th>
<th>R5</th>
<th>R6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: banded columns indicate nonfiction texts

Table 4 shows that the students’ scores for the non-fiction stories were not as high as the fiction stories. Students 1, 3, 5 and 6 scored within the developing stage of the non-fiction retelling stories. Student 4 increased his/her non-fiction score 11 points and moved from *developing* to *skilled* according the retelling form. Student 2 decreased his/her non-fiction score 10 points and moved from *skilled* to *needs work*. Students 3, 5 and 6 increased their fiction retelling scores each time.

Students 1, 4, 5, and 6 showed an increase in the retelling score each time they completed an oral retelling. Student 1 had a one-point increase on his/her non-fiction
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retelling. Student 5 increased two points in the fiction retelling giving him/her a perfect score on his/her final retelling. Student 6 had a three-point increase on his/her fiction retelling and moving levels from developing to skilled according the retelling form.

Table 5 displays the elements of the retelling that were omitted from the student’s oral retellings. The key elements that were scored on the non-fiction retelling form included, topic, main idea, details, organization, command of vocabulary, and accuracy. The key elements that were scored on the fiction retelling form included beginning, setting, characters, problem, sequence, and resolution.

Table 5

*Elements Omitted From Students’ Retellings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Week 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>setting, problem, resolution</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>setting, resolution</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>no omissions</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>organization</td>
<td>setting</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>organization</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>organization</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
<td>No omissions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: banded columns indicate nonfiction texts

Table 5 shows that during the first part of the study students 1, 2, 3 and 4 struggled with presenting the setting in a fiction story. Students 1 and 2 also struggled
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with providing the resolution or how the problem was solved in a fiction story. Student 1 struggled to identify the problem of the fiction story during week 1. Students 4, 5, and 6 struggled with the organization element of the retelling. Students 4, 5, and 6 retold non-fiction information accurately in their retelling but their facts were out of order and fragmented.

By week 4 students 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 included at least part of each element in their retelling. Student 2 struggled with the last non-fiction story when it came to organizing his/her retelling. By week 4 all students were including the necessary elements in their retelling or omitting only one element of the retelling. When comparing all omissions of non-fiction and fiction texts, the students omitted more elements from the fiction than the non-fiction texts.

Overall, the researcher found that the read-alouds aligned to the *Journeys* Basal reader series may have helped the students expand their oral retelling of the story. The students showed more growth overall in the Reading A-Z retelling form than the *Journeys* comprehension test. By the end of the study, 5 out the 6 students improved their retelling score by including each element of the story that was scored in their retellings. The students became more consistent during the oral retellings.

**How do read-alouds using picture books containing additional teacher-selected vocabulary from the basal reader impact vocabulary development of struggling first grade students?**

The researcher collected data to evaluate how read-alouds using pictures books containing additional teacher selected vocabulary impacted struggling first grade
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students’ vocabulary. Table 6 displays the number of correct responses out of four on the pre/post weekly teacher-selected vocabulary word test.

Table 6

*Weekly Vocabulary Pre/Post Test Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Week 1 Pre (post)</th>
<th>Week 2 Pre (post)</th>
<th>Week 3 Pre (post)</th>
<th>Week 4 Pre (post)</th>
<th>Week 5 Pre (post)</th>
<th>Week 6 Pre (post)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 (0)</td>
<td>0 (3)</td>
<td>2 (3)</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>2 (3)</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
<td>0 (4)</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
<td>2 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 (2)</td>
<td>2 (3)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>2 (3)</td>
<td>0 (4)</td>
<td>3 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2 (3)</td>
<td>0 (1)</td>
<td>1 (4)</td>
<td>4 (4)</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>2 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3 (2)</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>4 (4)</td>
<td>2 (4)</td>
<td>2 (4)</td>
<td>3 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2 (4)</td>
<td>3 (4)</td>
<td>2 (4)</td>
<td>3 (4)</td>
<td>3 (4)</td>
<td>3 (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 shows that students 5 and 6 either increased or kept the same score on every post-test during all six weeks. Student 6 received a perfect score on all post-tests throughout the six weeks. Student 5 received a perfect score on all post-tests during weeks 3 through 6. The data also show that all students increased or kept their score the same on the post-test during weeks 2-5 of the study. Students 1 and 3 decreased their score on the post-test during week 1. Students 2 and 3 decreased their score on the post-test during week 6.

During week 4, students 2, 4, 5, and 6 received a perfect score on the post test and students 1 and 3 received a 3 out 4 on the post test. Week 4 showed the highest scores on the post-test overall. Week 4 story was the story about the butterfly life cycle, and the
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pre-test scores seemed to show that students 1, 4, and 6 had prior background knowledge about vocabulary in the story.

Table 7 displays the vocabulary words that the students used during their oral retelling. These data were recorded by the researcher every Friday during the intervention stage of the study.

Table 7

*Vocabulary Words Used In Oral Retelling*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Week 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>no words</td>
<td>caterpillar</td>
<td>floating,</td>
<td>violin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>bird feeder</td>
<td>chrysalis,</td>
<td>insects,</td>
<td>caterpillar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>bird feeder</td>
<td>chrysalis,</td>
<td>caterpillar</td>
<td>milkweed</td>
<td>no words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>flippers</td>
<td>no words</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discovered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>tusks,</td>
<td>sidewalk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>frame,</td>
<td>drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>desert</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>drawing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>no words</td>
<td>no words</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>frame,</td>
<td>drawing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 shows that students 1, 2, and 3 used at least one vocabulary word in their retelling. Students 2 and 3 used 3 out of the 4 vocabulary words during their retelling of intervention story 4. Student 5 was the only student who used at least one vocabulary word in each retelling that he/she completed. Student 6 only used vocabulary words in
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week 5 when completing the oral retelling of the story. During weeks 1 and 3, two out the three students used only one vocabulary word and one out of the three students did not use any vocabulary words. During both of these weeks the main story was a fiction story. During week 1 the story was about a pig that was asking his friends what is wrong with his tree. During week 3 the main story was about a boy who was learning how to whistle and couldn’t. These were the only times during the study when only one vocabulary word was used in the story retellings. The rest of the weeks at least had one student using at least two words in their retelling.

Summary

The findings of this study identified the impact that read-alouds using picture books had on students’ reading comprehension and vocabulary development. After analyzing and interpreting the results, the researcher drew conclusions of the intervention. Chapter five discusses the findings for each question in the study.
Chapter Five

Discussion

This chapter presents the conclusions from the study that investigated how read-alouds impacted students’ reading comprehension and vocabulary development. The researcher followed Hick, Pollard-Durodola, and Vaughn’s (2004) elements of story read-alouds, along with Beck, McKeown, and Kucan’s (2002) steps with using Robust Vocabulary instruction in order to enhance the *Journeys* (Baumann et al., 2011) basal reading series vocabulary. The results of this study as well as recommendations for further research on this topic will be included.

**How do read-alouds using picture books containing additional teacher-selected vocabulary impact struggling first grade students’ understanding of the stories in the basal reader?**

Comprehension was assessed using the *Journeys* (Baumann et al., 2011) comprehension test along with the Reading A-Z (http://www.readinga-z.com) retelling form. Using the *Journeys* weekly comprehension tests, the researcher collected baseline data before the study was implemented and then weekly during the intervention. The results showed that two of the six students showed higher scores on a consistent basis during the intervention period. Four of the six students’ data were inconsistent in the test scores. The results showed that all students struggled with two of the three non-fiction texts (see Table 3).
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Based on the results recorded on the Reading A-Z retelling form, the data showed that all students scored higher on the fiction story retelling and lower on the non-fiction retelling. The results showed four of the six students scored within the developing stage during the non-fiction story retellings. One out of the six students improved his/her score 11 points from intervention two to intervention six of the non-fiction story retelling. Three of the six students improved their retelling scores on fiction text each time. One of the six students moved from developing to skilled during the fiction retellings. On an overall basis, four of the six students increased their score each time they completed an oral retelling (see Table 4). These findings support the work of Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002) along with the National Reading Panel report (2000) that claimed that teacher read-alouds build students’ oral comprehension and helps students better understand the content that is read aloud. Based on the results from the oral retelling form the researcher would conclude that by following Beck, McKeown, and Kucan’s instructional guidelines (2002) along with Hickman, Pollard-Durodola and Vaughn’s (2004) instructional sequence of read-alouds, the students increased the their overall comprehension in regards to fiction text. The researcher concludes that students need more work or different strategies to use with non-fiction texts. The researchers recommends following Baker et al. (2013) procedures for read-aloud instruction in both expository and narrative texts. The authors introduced expository texts first to build background knowledge and then followed the read aloud strategy with narrative texts.

The researcher analyzed the retelling form to see what elements were omitted during the story retelling. During the beginning of the study, four of the six students omitted the setting of the story, and two of the six students omitted the resolution of the
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story in their retellings. Four of the six students omitted how the story was organized in a non-fiction text. By intervention four, five of the six students did not omit any elements of the story during their retellings. This supports what Kindle (2009) and Hickman, Pollard-Durodola and Vaughn (2004) found, that incorporating effective read-aloud elements along with using an appropriate text and selecting high-impact words help students to learn the vocabulary needed and extend reading comprehension. Kindle’s (2009) study focused on examining the strategies that teachers used to develop vocabulary and found that teachers used many different strategies during their read-aloud instruction, and some teachers’ strategies had a stronger impact on word learning than others, which depended on the read-aloud practices the teachers followed. Hickman, Pollard-Durodola and Vaughn’s (2004) study focused on improving vocabulary and comprehension for English-language learners. They found that the key to building comprehension through the development of vocabulary was to keep it simple and to have in-depth discussions about the story. By using both studies and following a simple guideline for read-aloud instruction, the researcher was able to see the students increase their reading comprehension scores on the Reading A-Z retelling form. Therefore, the researcher would conclude that the read-aloud instruction impacted the students’ oral retellings.

How do read-alouds using picture books containing additional teacher-selected vocabulary from the basal reader impact vocabulary development of struggling first grade students?

Vocabulary knowledge was assessed using the teacher-created weekly vocabulary pre/post-test along with the researcher’s scores on the Reading A-Z retelling form. Using
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the weekly vocabulary pre/post-test, the researcher analyzed how many of the four vocabulary words the students had learned by the end of the week. During intervention two through intervention five, all students either maintained or increased their scores on the post-test. During intervention 1 and intervention 6, two of the six students decreased their scores on the post-test. During intervention four, four of the six students received a perfect score on the post-test and two of six students received a three out of four on the post-test. Week four showed the highest scores on the post-test compared to the other weeks in which the interventions were being taught, possibly due to prior background knowledge they already had about butterflies.

One of the six students received a perfect score on all post-tests throughout the entire study. This student was one of the two students receiving ESL services. This supports Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, and Vaughn’s (2004) study on integrating effective vocabulary for English Language Learners (ELLs) by providing a consistent read-aloud activity. In their study, Hickman et al. found that it was important for English-language learners to develop oral language and comprehension by following a five-step practice. They also found that “students who are ELL’s will require effective and ongoing instruction in vocabulary and comprehension to improve their oral language skills” (p. 728). By following Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, and Vaughn’s (2004) read-aloud practice steps and examining the weekly vocabulary scores, the researcher would conclude that both students who are ELL and students who were not ELL showed improvement on their vocabulary knowledge by the end of each week.

Using the Reading A-Z retelling form, the researcher wrote down any vocabulary words that were used during the retelling. One of the six students used at least one
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vocabulary word in each of his/her retellings. During week four, two of the three students who completed the retelling used three of the four vocabulary words in their retelling. All three students used at least one word in their retellings during week four. At least one vocabulary word was used each week during the retelling.

These data support what Cohen and Byrnes (2007) found about how read-aloud instruction and an in-depth explanation of unkown words in students’ vocabulary is an effective way of increasing a child’s vocabulary. In their study, Cohen and Byrnes focused on how vocabulary instructional procedures impacted students’ oral and written communications. They compared two vocabulary instructional procedures that were used in a third grade classroom, story with instruction and traditional instruction. They found that in the story with instruction group, the students gained more vocabulary than students in the traditional group, and students in the story with instruction group used more words in their sentences than the traditional group. The results also support what Coyne and Brynes (2007) found for English Language Learners, “it was very important that the students comprehend the targeted vocabulary words in trade books through conversations and revisiting the words throughout the week” (Coyne & Brynes, 2007, p. 288). By using read-alouds and selecting four vocabulary words each week the data showed, that even though students did not use all words in their oral retellings, they were becoming familiar with the words in the texts. Beck et al. (2002) selected three words when incorporating their story read-alouds, and found multiple ways to integrate the words into other activities. Beck et al. (2002) found, “Young children’s listening and speaking competence is in advance of their reading and writing competence” (Beck et al.,
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2002, p. 48). Thus, Beck and colleagues chose to teach fewer, more complex words in greater depth.

Reflections

Reflecting on the intervention, the researcher would recommend following the read-aloud practice recommended by Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002) because, their research has proven that young children can learn and understand more complex words when presented to them orally. To further extend her research, the researcher would like to expand the instructional sequence by using more vocabulary activities that will allow the students to interact more with the vocabulary words. The researcher found that while the read-aloud strategy had a limited effect on the students’ vocabulary and comprehension, using other strategies and activities along with the read-aloud activity could impact students on a deeper level.

Since it was noticed that students struggled more with the non-fiction text, the researcher would also like to look at other strategies that could help build students’ vocabulary and background knowledge with non-fiction text. Beck, McKeown, and Kucan’s (2002) robust vocabulary instruction focused the use of vocabulary from fiction text, which proved to impact the students when using a fiction text. The data collected by the researcher showed that students’ retellings of fiction stories had higher scores than the non-fiction on the retelling form. The researcher would like to find other non-fiction picture books that might impact the students’ oral retellings of non-fiction stories. Along with finding other non-fiction texts, the researcher would like to research procedures for non-fiction read-alouds and retellings. The researcher would also like to continue the practice of doing oral retellings using the Reading A-Z retelling rubric with the students.
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The researcher would also like to re-examine the words that were selected in both the non-fiction and fiction texts to see if that will impact the students’ vocabulary on a deeper level. The researcher would first look at the words that were omitted in the retellings. Then the researcher would continue to implement the read-aloud vocabulary procedure with additional stories from the *Journeys* (Baumann et al., 2011) series.

Summary

The use of read-alouds appeared to be an effective strategy to help increase student’s vocabulary and background knowledge for struggling readers. Each student showed an increase in either the recognition of the vocabulary words or an increase in their oral retellings or both. Results on the weekly *Journeys* comprehension tests were mixed. In order to help students better comprehend stories either they are reading or hearing, teachers need to use and follow effective instructional strategies that build vocabulary and background knowledge.
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References


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Appendices
Appendix A

Example of *Journeys* Weekly Comprehension Test with Underlined Vocabulary Words
Sequence of Events, Selection Test

Think about the story "A Butterfly Grows." Then read each question. Mark the space for the best answer to each question.

1. What takes place at the **START** of the story?
   - ☐ A caterpillar walks on a leaf.
   - ☐ It begins to rain on the caterpillar.
   - ☐ A caterpillar is hatching out of an egg.

2. At first, the **caterpillar** grew in —
   - ☐ milk
   - ☐ a leaf
   - ☐ an egg

3. Why does the **caterpillar** hang on a branch?
   - ☐ The wind blows it.
   - ☐ The rain drops on it.
   - ☐ An animal wants to eat it.

---

To the teacher: Read the directions with children.
4. What takes place right **AFTER** it rains?
   - The caterpillar swims.
   - The caterpillar flies away.
   - The caterpillar sips water.

5. What is **milkweed**?
   - a kind of plant
   - a kind of drink
   - a kind of caterpillar

6. Why does the skin of a **caterpillar** get snug?
   - It eats and eats.
   - It is ready to hatch.
   - It is growing wings.

7. What takes place right **BEFORE** the caterpillar becomes a **chrysalis**?
   - It lays eggs.
   - It finds a place to rest.
   - It flies to a warm place.
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Name __________________________  Date ____________

8. How long does the chrysalis last?
   ☐ two days
   ☐ ten days
   ☐ ten years

9. What takes place **AFTER** the caterpillar becomes a chrysalis?
   ☐ It eats milkweed.
   ☐ It grows in an egg.
   ☐ It becomes a butterfly.

10. How is a caterpillar different from a butterfly?
    ☐ A butterfly has legs.
    ☐ A butterfly has wings.
    ☐ A butterfly gets food from plants.

Mark Student Reading Level:

   ☐ Independent  ☐ Instructional  ☐ Listening

---

Lesson 24
WEEKLY TESTS 24.7

A Butterfly Grows
Comprehension

---

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Appendix B

Reading A-Z Fiction Retelling Form
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---

**Fiction Retelling Scoring Form**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student's Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Title</td>
<td>Score</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rubric for Scoring Individual Story Elements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complete, detailed</th>
<th>3 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>2 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragmentary (sketchy)</td>
<td>1 point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inaccurate or not included</td>
<td>0 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Elements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompts</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Observer Comments:**

**Total points**

**Interpreting the Point Totals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>15–21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>8–14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs work</td>
<td>0–7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using Teacher Read-Alouds

Appendix C

Reading A-Z Non-fiction Retelling Form
## Nonfiction Retelling Scoring Form

**Student's Name** ____________________________  **Date** ____________________________

**Book Title** ____________________________  **Score** ____________________________

### Rubric for Scoring Individual Story Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete, detailed</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragmentary (sketchy)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inaccurate or not included</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Key Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Prompts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic (understands the topic)</td>
<td>What is this book about?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main idea(s)</td>
<td>What are the main ideas of the book (sections)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details (recalls details linked to main idea)</td>
<td>Name the supporting details of each main idea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization (knows how the book is organized)</td>
<td>How is the information in the book organized? (e.g., chronological, classification, randomly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Command of Vocabulary (uses key vocabulary from story)</td>
<td>What are some of the key terms presented in the book?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy (reels facts accurately)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Level of prompting

**Observer Comments:**

**Total points** __________

### Intervention for the Retelling:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>15–21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>8–14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs work</td>
<td>0–7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Appendix D

Student Sample of Reading A-Z Fiction Retelling form
# Fiction Retelling Scoring Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student's Name: Student 3</th>
<th>Date: 3/20/15</th>
<th>Score: 18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Title: The Tree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Rubric for Scoring Individual Story Elements

- Complete, detailed: 3 points
- Partial: 2 points
- Fragmentary (sketchy): 1 point
- Inaccurate or not included: 0 points

## Key Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompts</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequence</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Score:** 18

## Observer Comments:

He struggled with character names but gave many details. He used a vocabulary word in retell. C (birdfeeder)

## Interpreting the Point Totals

- **Skilled:** 15-21
- **Developing:** 8-14
- **Needs work:** 0-7
Using Teacher Read-Alouds

Appendix E

Student Sample of Reading A-Z Non-fiction Retelling
Using Teacher Read-Alouds
Using Teacher Read-Alouds

Appendix F

Sample of a Vocabulary Pre/Post-test
Lesson 24 A Butterfly Grows Vocabulary

Name: _______________________

Directions: look at the picture and circle the word that matches the picture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pea</th>
<th>Cotton</th>
<th>Chrysalis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spiders</td>
<td>Insects</td>
<td>Toys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worm</td>
<td>Caterpillar</td>
<td>Snake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Milkweed</td>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>Tree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G

Example of Parent Consent Form in English
Using Teacher Read-Alouds

Wittenberg University
Ward Street at
North Wittenberg Avenue
Post Office Box 720
Springfield, Ohio
45501-0720

Background
Your Child is being asked to participate in a research study being conducted by Lauren Ratliff, a graduate student at Wittenberg University, seeking a Masters degree in Education. This research seeks to investigate vocabulary development of first grade students. The study further seeks to investigate how read-alouds impact both vocabulary development and reading comprehension. Please read the following information carefully and please ask questions about anything you do not understand.

Study Procedure
The Research for this study will be conducted during the students’ reading block and will involve 6 participants. The Study will be six weeks in duration. Each class meeting will be approximately 30 minutes. The data collection will be conducted by Lauren Ratliff. The data collected by the researcher will include the weekly scores on the Journey's reading tests, weekly pre-/post-tests on the vocabulary words selected by the researcher, and end-of-the-week story retellings that will take place every other week with the researcher.

Risks
The risks involved in this study are considered to be minimal, as the participants may experience discomfort in meeting one-on-one with the teacher. Your child has the right, at any time, to abstain from answering any question and has the right to choose not to participate in the study, without repercussions. The confidentiality of the student will be maintained at all times, and the results of the study will not reveal any personal information.

Benefits
A benefit to the participating student is it will allow the student the opportunity to continue building and expanding his or her vocabulary and reading comprehension. Another possible benefit from participation in this study is the information it will provide to the researcher, faculty, and administration in the research site school, and this information could be used in the development of future studies on vocabulary development. Since there has been little research in vocabulary and read-alouds together, the results of this study will also inform the larger research community about vocabulary development through the use of read-alouds.

Alternative Procedures
The only alternative procedure for participating in this study is choosing not to participate.

Confidentiality
Every effort will be made to protect your child’s confidentiality, including:
1. Only the researcher will know that your child is participating in this study.
Using Teacher Read-Alouds

Wittenberg University

Ward Street at
North Wittenberg Avenue
Post Office Box 720
Springfield, Ohio
45501-0720

2. Pseudonyms will be used on all student work samples related to this study.
3. Pseudonyms will be used on all written material (e.g., thesis) related to this study.
4. All data collected during the study will be placed in a locked file cabinet that is only accessible by the researcher.

Persons to Contact
For questions regarding this study or any related matters, you may contact the principal investigator, Lauren Ratiiff, at 937-935-5912 or the researcher’s thesis chair, Roberta Linder at 937-327-6342 or email rlinder@wittenberg.edu.

For questions regarding your rights as a participant, please contact Chairman of Institutional Review Board, Dr. Ralph Lenz, at 937-327-6405.

Voluntary Participation
Your child’s participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide to allow your child to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. You are free to withdraw your child from this study at any time without penalty. Choosing to withdraw your child from the study will not affect the relationship you or your child has with the investigator.

Cost to Subjects
Your participation in this research study will not result in any additional costs.

Consent
By signing this consent form, I ____________________________ (Print your name), confirm that I have read and understood the above information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my child’s participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw my child at any time, without reason. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree for my child to take part in this study.

Child’s Name: ____________________________

__________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________
Your signature              Relationship to child     Date

__________________________  ____________________________
Signature of researcher     Date
Using Teacher Read-Alouds

Appendix H

Example of Parent Consent Form in Spanish
Información preliminar
Le estamos pidiendo a su hijo participar de un estudio que será conducido por Lauren Ratliff, una estudiante de escuela graduada de la universidad de Wittenberg que está haciendo una maestría en educación. Este estudio busca investigar el desarrollo del vocabulario de los estudiantes del primer grado. A través de este estudio investigaremos si las lecturas en voz alta impactan el desarrollo en el vocabulario y la comprensión de lectura del niño. Por favor lea la siguiente información cuidadosamente y haga cualquier pregunta si no comprende.

Procedimiento del estudio
El estudio será conducido durante el período de lectura e incluirá unos 6 participantes. Este estudio será conducido por unas 6 semanas. Cada clase será de unos 30 minutos aproximadamente. Lauren Ratliff estará recolectando la data del estudio e incluirá unas puntuaciones semanales de las pruebas de lectura Journeys, pruebas de vocabulario y cuentos que se estarán leyendo en el salón de clases.

Riesgos
El riesgo que los participantes deben considerar durante este estudio es mínimo. Los participantes quizás se sientan un poco incomodos al hablar directamente (de uno en uno) con la maestra. Su niño tiene el derecho de abstenerse de contestar cualquier pregunta en cualquier momento y decidir no participar del estudio sin ningún tipo de repercusión. La confidencialidad del estudiante será mantenida durante todo momento y los resultados del estudio no revelaran ningún tipo de información personal.

Beneficios
El beneficio de participar de este estudio es que el estudiante tendrá la oportunidad de continuar expandiendo su vocabulario y comprensión de lectura. Otro posible beneficio de participar de este estudio es que la información que obtengamos entre el investigador, la facultad y la administración de la escuela, ayudará al desarrollo de estudios que en un futuro fomenten el desarrollo del vocabulario. Debido a que no hay muchos estudios en esta área, los resultados del mismo informaran en un ámbito comunitario sobre el desarrollo del vocabulario con el uso de las lecturas en voz alta.

Procedimiento Alternativo
El único procedimiento alternativo para estudiantes que no deseen participar es no ser parte del estudio.

Confidencialidad
Estaremos haciendo todo el esfuerzo posible para proteger la confidencialidad de su niño, que incluye:
1. Solamente el investigado sabrá que su niño está participando del estudio.
Using Teacher Read-Alouds

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North Wittenberg Avenue
Post Office Box 720
Springfield, Ohio
45501-0720

2. Utilizaremos seudónimos para identificar las muestras de trabajo de cada estudiante.
3. Los seudónimos serán utilizados en todos los materiales (i.e. tesis) relacionados con este estudio.
4. Toda la data recolectada durante este estudio será guardada bajo llave.

Contactos
Para preguntas relaciona con este estudio puede comunicarse con la investigadora principal, Lauren Ratliff al (937) 935-5912 o la investigadora de la tesis Roberta Linder al (937) 327-6342 o al correo electrónico rlinder@wittenberg.edu

Para preguntas de acuerdo con sus derechos como participantes, puede llamar al director del instituto, Dr. Ralph Lenz al (937) 327-6405.

Participacion Voluntaria
La participación de su hijo en este estudio es completitamente voluntaria. Si usted decide que su hijo participe del estudio, debe firmar esta hoja de consentimiento. Usted puede dar de baja a su hijo en cualquier momento sin penalidad. Si decide dar de baja a su hijo, no habrá ninguna penalidad ni la relación con la investigadora y su hijo se verá afectada.

Costo
Su participación no incurrirá ningún tipo de gastos.

Consentimiento
Al firmar esta hoja de consentimiento, yo ________________________________ (escriba su nombre), confirme que he leído y comprendido la información arriba mencionada y tengo la oportunidad de hacer cualquier pregunta. Entiendo que la participación de mi hijo en este estudio es completamente voluntaria y puedo dar de baja a mi hijo en cualquier momento sin explicaciones. Comprendo que me darán una copia de esta hoja de consentimiento. Yo estoy de acuerdo, voluntariamente, con que mi hijo sea parte de este estudio.

Nombre del niño ________________________________

Su firma ____________________________ Relación con el niño ____________________________ Fecha ________________

Firma de la maestra ____________________________ Fecha ________________